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Ex Æd. Sab. 29 Aug. 1663.

G. Sradling S. T. P. Rev. in Christo Pat. D. Gilb. Epiſc. Lond. à Sac. Domeſt.

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A SERMON AGAINST Neutrality;

Whether as to the main Subſtantials of Religion, or matters of Injoyned Order.

Preached at the Viſitation of the Reverend, Doctour *Cary*, Arch-deacon of *Exon*, at St *Marie's Exon*, on Friday in *Eaſter*-Week. 1663.

By *E. W. A. M.*

Ὀυ ςασιάζει μοι πρὸς γλῶτταν ἡ γνώμη· ὅτω φρονῶν, ὅτω λέγων ἀρέσκειν δίμαι τῷ θεῷ Syneſ. Epiſt. 105. Ad Fratrem.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. M.* for *J. Martyn*, & *J. Alleſtry*, and are to be ſold at the ſign of the *Bell* in St *Paul's* Church-yard. 1663.

UMI

THE

DEDICATION.

I Would not that any mans name ſhould be queſtioned, or judgement ſuſpected, for my faults: much leſs, that the leaſt ſpot of that dirt which thoſe who are petulantly averſe from what I perſwade may haply think fit to caſt upon me, ſhould glance or reflect upon another face than mine own.

This Sermon therefore, however publiſhed upon the importunity (and truly to

my modesty almost constraint) of some Reverend Friends, whose patronage therefore it might have presumed upon, and not without the permission of a Right Reverend and Honourable Person, who having received the Authour under his wing would not (I hope) have turn'd away his Labours, shall, notwithstanding the Malignity of some, from which it might seem to need a Protection, come forth Dedicated to no other than those who, amongst the multitude, whether of Neutral *or Separating Brethren, are of Nobler and more Ingenuous Spirits than the rest, and dare resolve with patience to read, and impartially to weigh that which good will, with a Charitable and Passionate hand, tenders, to convict them of what (according to its best judgment and cleerest reason) it esteems their (at least) neglected duty,* viz. *Unity and through Conformity.*

Were

Were I not, after diligent endeavours to inform my ſelf, and upon as mature conſideration as I can take, fully perſwaded of what I ſay, I ſhould not have ſpoken ſo boldly: Notwithſtanding, this my aſſurance as to the cauſe extends not it ſelf to my management of it: Here I am not ſo confident but that I deſire a candid Reader; nor, on the contrary, am I conſcious to my ſelf of any thing ſo raw, that I fear a malevolous cenſurer. Moſt candidly ſhall I think my ſelf to be dealt with, if received with an unprejudiced mind; and moſt unkind is he, not ſo much to me, as to truth and himſelf, who doth otherwiſe.

Προλαβόντος τὸ ψεῦδος ἀπισῶται τὸ ἀληθὲς. Cyril. Hieroſ. Cat. Illum. 15.

Be intreated then, who readeſt this, to lay aſide thine own opinion while thou art a reading, to practiſe an harmleſs Neutrality *for an hour, that thou mayſt ever after hate the ſinful, to be of no party ſo long, as while thou canſt fairly*

fairly weigh what is ſaid, and having done ſo, thou haſt fully gratified the Authours deſire; for let thy ſentence be never ſo hard, he will embrace it as his deſert.

Edw. Wetenhall.

A SERMON

Againſt Neutrality; whether as to the main Subſtantials of Religion, or matters of Injoyned Order.

The Text. 1 Kings 18. 21.

How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.

WHile as yet that freſh and morning light, the Image of the Creatours Omniſcience, ſhone in mans mind, as heaven from whence it came for brightneſs, and his Virgin ſoul had not conſented to receive that poiſon of nature which the Serpent endeavoured to

inſtill, all his life and actions were but one continued emanation of Divine love and innocence, the harmonious reſult and concord of ſweetly conſpiring powers; his *affections* and *will* readily following *Reaſon*, and all being happily ſubject unto *Faith*, or that knowledge of the *Divine Will*, which was then an ingredient of his nature: And while the memory of their late departed Lord, and his ſo often inculcated, *Love one another*, was as yet hot in the Chriſtian Church, and nothing ſo much took up their thoughts, as how they might be ſureſt to follow him, *the multitude of them believed were together of one mind and of one accord.*

Acts 2.

But, when man not acquieſcing in allowed intelligibles, and the innocent experience which he might gain thereby, muſt be *knowing good and evil*, at once came in blindneſs upon his minde, and unrulineſs upon his other faculties: And when amongſt the thouſands of Baptized proſelytes ſome had ſtolen in, who undertook their Chriſtianity chiefly out of a deſign of ſecular intereſt and fame, there quickly ſprung up *diviſions amongſt them*, one crying *I am of Paul*, another *I am of Apollos*, a third *I am of Cephas*, and another haply, I am for none of theſe underling Teachers, *I am of Chriſt*. And though it be true what Church ſtory tells us, that

1 Cor. 1.

that *while the Apoſtles were yet alive*, no *hereſie could much ſpread it ſelf*, yet the foundations as well of hereſie as ſchiſm, being through the corruptneſs of ſome in their dayes already laid, when theſe Maſter-builders were by death put aſide, miſerable rents ſoon hapned in the houſe: Ever ſince which time, that aforeſaid natural irregularity interpoſing it ſelf in the feu'd, mens affections and intereſts (which of right ought to follow the ſincere and genuine dictates of their conſciences) have (contrarily) form'd their opinions, and many have eſpouſed this or that party, not becauſe juſteſt, but becauſe moſt ſuitable with their preſent deſign and fancy; moſt, by far, have ſeemed to ſwim with the ſtream, and be of that ſide which took, but have truly been of none. *Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib. 3. c. 28.*

To reduce men from this either their halting between two opinions, or for their private ends from following *Baal* to follow *God*, there can be no expedient, that I know, more effectual, than the recalling of them to the clear and natural ſence of their unprejudiced minds, touching every thing in queſtion, the naked reaſon of each being freely, as it ought, conſidered: which if the Chriſtian world would but be brought unto, the perſwaſion which men have of every matter would be onely proportionable to the

nature of the evidence which inforceth it, and ſo that blind zeal would ſoon fall to the ground, from whence men grow commonly moſt hot for, and * *confident of thoſe things which they can ſo little prove that they never made queſtions of.*

* Obſerved by Biſhop *Tailour* in his *Ep. Ded.* to his *Great Exemplar*, that men are commonly moſt confident of thoſe things, &c.

If we ſearch to the bottom this the Prophets reaſoning with the uncertain and wavering multitude, of this nature ſhall we find to be the way he takes; Firſt, indeed, reprehending them, not ſo directly for their being idolaters, as nothing, in thoſe words, *How long halt ye between two opinions?* but then immediately calling them to a clear weighing the ſtate of the matter in that his moſt pertinent and rational *dilemma* framed thereof, *If the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.*

Part I.

We muſt begin with the Prophets reprehenſion of the People divided, not ſo much all amongſt themſelves, as each againſt himſelf, having more than half a mind for *Baal*, and yet ſomewhat loath quite to abandon the ancienter worſhip of their true God; and hereof it will be neceſſary to conſider, Firſt the form, and then the matter.

It's form is by way of an expoſtulatory increpation, ſomewhat round rough and biting; the Prophet not judging this, either caſe, or People, to be lightly touch'd with a tender and wary admonition,

monition, but ſharply to be exagitated. Some crimes, and ſome offenders too, admit not a ſoft reprover, but would tempt a very *Stoick* to be paſſionate. When the people, to whom the lively Oracles of God were firſt committed, are grown ſo miſerably pendulous, and indifferent, as to queſtion which is to be followed, *God* or *Baal*, it is truly

Difficile Satyram non ſcribere; nam quis iniquæ
Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus, ut teneat ſe?

Even *Elijah*'s very firſt ſalutation of them is a kinde of Sarcaſm.

I muſt profeſs my ſelf, though ſometimes in an haſte as prone to aculeate language as any man, yet upon conſideration to be naturally no friend unto Invectives, nor apt much to applaud their authours; it being an eaſie thing for any one almoſt to be eloquent againſt men, whoſe either vices croſs his *Genius*, or party thwarts his intereſt, and eaſieſt of all things to ſome, who have wits after a ſort framed thereto; of which kinde I have known many, that can never for their hearts compoſe any thing excellent, unleſs they have ſomewhat that they may throughly laſh at. Such perſons we may obſerve to be commonly full of δυϑάδεια, humourſome, and much in love with themſelves and their own. The contemplation of their humour

mour croſt, or commodity prejudiced, is * *a Fan to inflame that love, which being ſet on fire naturally ſharpeneth the wit* to declaim; and in concluſion, this Oratory either meets with ſuch Hearers againſt whom it was intended, and them it further exaſperates; or with perſons in the ſame mood with the declamitant, and theſe it neſtles up in their moroſe humour, ſtrangely contented with their own diſpleaſure;

* The words of Mr. Hooker in another like caſe. *Pref. to Eccl. Pol.*

Perſ. Sat. 1. [*Hoc videre meum, tam nil, nullâ tibi vendam Iliade.*]

So that the effect of theſe Satyrical diſcourſes is uſually as miſchievous as their framing is always eaſie: Commonly *ſoft words and hard arguments* would do better. But though theſe be the originals and conſequences of ordinary invectives, yet cannot they but unjuſtly be applied as objections againſt either the lawfulneſs or ſeaſonableneſs (ſometimes) of ſharp reproofs; there being as wide a difference betwixt *reprehending* and *inveighing*, as there is betwixt a deſign of charitable *juſtice* and an act of *ſpleen*, the one aiming at others reformation, the other ſeeking chiefly to vent it ſelf, and puniſh rather than amend.

Now concerning the juſtifiableneſs of reproofs, as ſharp for their nature as this of the

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Prophet's, we finde St. *Paul* when inſtructing *Titus* how to deal with his *Cretians*, amongſt other Rules preſcribing this, that he ſhould *rebuke them ſharply*; and the ſame to *Timothy* as to his *Epheſians*, *Them that ſin rebuke before all*; and ſo rebuke, *that others may fear* rebukes of that nature. Now ſure we are, theſe Precepts are no where by St. *Paul* retracted; nor is it any piece of difficulty to trace them, as here in the Prophets; ſo abroad in our Saviours and his Apoſtles practices. Every reprehenſive diſcourſe then, which falls from God's Miniſters, though haply tart and ſeemingly paſſionate, is not forthwith to be accounted a fit of railing, or the out-breaking pet of an impotent ſpirit, ſeeing corroſives themſelves (in due caſes) are neceſſary; and not to apply them when need requires, is by ſparing to kill, and to ruine for meer pity.

Tit. 1. 13. & 2. 15.

1 *Tim.* 5. 20.

But he who uſeth ſuch reproofs had need both of *innocence* and *wiſdom*: Of *innocence*, I ſay, at leaſt as to the crime by him reproved; who elſe would think him ſerious in his reprehenſions, or believe that the dictates of his unbiaſſed judgment condemn that which his practice approves? And of *wiſdom*, as well to diſcern the *Tempora fandi*, the ſeaſon of reproof, as to proportionate the meaſure and man-

manner of the reproof to the desert of the crime and temper of the offender. But as to the form of this the Prophet's reprehension enough; now as to the matter and charge it self.

Jeroboam's Calves were now come almost to the same pass amongst the *Israelites*, that *Esculapius Julian's* fictitious Saviour was in later Ages, no one much believed them to be gods, and they that would have made them so least of all. But this pair of golden deities being neglected, though not as yet quite down, *Non deficit aureus alter*; for to keep on foot the Trade of Idolatry, the Worship of *Baal* is introduced: and though the people did not much acquiesce in either, yet both together had made a shift to justle out the Worship of God, till such a famine invaded *Israel*, that had these divine Calves been living, as they were molten ones, they would scarce have been able to have defended their godships from their worshippers sharper appetite; or if they had, they must with King *Ahab* their Patron have come to seek out *Elijah* to pray for some Rain and Grass to keep alive them as well as the other Cattel. *Elijah*, having now got *Ahab* in a manner his suppliant, improves the opportunity to the destroying of *Baal's* worship; and before he will do any thing, will needs have the Godhead of the

the *Lord* and *Baal* tried upon this iſſue, Which could anſwer his invoking Servants with fire from Heaven; to which trial all *Iſrael* being come, the Prophet ſalutes them with this reprehenſive expoſtulation, *How long halt ye between two opinions?* neither acquieſcing in the idolatrous, nor yet returning to the true worſhip.

The word פסחים rendred here by *halting* hath an *homonymy* or two, and ſignifies firſt *to leap*, as in the twenty ſixth Verſe of this Chapter, [*And they leaped upon the Altar*] then *to halt*, becauſe they who *halt* ſeem to *leap* as they go; and laſtly, *to paſs over*, whence come פֶּסַח and πάσχα, the words which firſt ſignifie the *Jewiſh* Paſsover: ſo that what we render, *How long halt ye between two opinions?* might with no leſs probability and conſonancy to the place be rendred, *How long paſs ye over beween*, or *to two opinions?* that is, from one to another, being ſtedfaſt to none; which being ſo, there ſeems to be a twofold Neutrality, wherewith the Prophet here chargeth the People; the one a *deſultorious* kinde of *tranſition* or paſſing over from one minde to another, and haply to a third, a being *ubique*, and therefore *nuſquam*, as faſt as they could on every ſide, and all the while on none; the other an *halt-*

וַיְפַסְּחוּ

ing between two ſides, ſo as to go lamely on this, and lamely on that, but uprightly on neither; of which that conſiſteth in *a conſtant changeableneſs*, this in an *obſequious indifferency*; (two evils which who ſo hath obſerved in our age, & can tell me, wch hath been more ordinary, or which is worſe, [*Erit mihi magnus Apollo*] ſhall ever by me be accounted an Oracle.

And firſt, as to the unſetled, *variable*, or true Changelings, whom I reckon as one *ſpecies* of Neuters, relying upon the undoubted verity of this obſervation, that he who upon occaſion will be any thing is truly nothing; whoſoever will to day cry up this or that *characteriſtical opinion of a party* as the *great way of God*, a leading Truth, the main Preſervative of the power of godlineſs, and within a while having deſerted that, upon new light, ſay as much for a ſecond, and upon a providential call, that is, a Change in State, ſerve his ſecond Tenets as he did his firſt, and decrying them cry up others newly adopted, and ſo on; ſuch an one, I ſay, we may be ſure, is no more real, than he is conſtant to any. A piece of Neutrality which ran much in the bloud of the *Jewiſh* Nation, as appears under all forms of their Government, in their making a molten Calf under *Moſes* his conduct, in their ſerving *Moloch*, *Aſhtaroth*, and *Baal*,

Baal, &c. under their Judges, the Calves under their Kings, and any thing as the whim took them.

But why ſpeak I of the *Jews?* Were all the Generations of them to be lived over again in one, it were poſſible to finde in our Nation particular perſons that ſhould outchange them all; and I wiſh we had never had any ſuch Brethren of the Clergy, (I had ſaid of the Gown, but that many, who pretended to be of the Miniſtry, had made a change in this caſe, which the * old *Jews* in *Egypt* it ſelf would not, and changed their Habit too, (me thinks alſo ſome who would not ſeem to be of them continue their mode ſtill) as if none could be of the *Gens togata*, who muſt not by being ſo neceſſarily own *Rome*) I ſay, I wiſh there had never been any ſuch Changers that had ſet up in the Temple. But are there not thoſe who have taken the ſame Orders, Oaths, and made, for the main, the ſame Subſcriptions too, with us, yea and accordingly done all that we do, who yet, after all this, could take contrariant Covenants (which we ſhould not have mentioned but that they ſtill juſtifie) Vows and Proteſtations, and then ſwallow down *Solemn Addreſſes* equivalent in a manner to Oaths, but contrary to all the former, till at length having changed their mindes

שלשה דברים לא שנו ישראל במצרים שמותם ומלבושם ולשונם:

Tria hæc in Egypto non mutârunt Iſraelitæ, nomina ſua habitúmq; & linguam. Elias Levit. in præfat. Lex. Chald.

ſo often, that they knew not how to ſhew their faces to their ſeduced Flocks, who looked upon theſe miſchiefs, into which they had preached them, as the onely way of God; and therefore would have been ſure to have plagued them with Cenſures, (and ſomewhat elſe it may be) ſhould they have changed their mindes again, they reſolved on another but a worſe Change than ever, and changed their Calling too. And yet (maugre both the ſenſe of the World and Truth it ſelf) notwithſtanding all this *halting*, theſe are the onely *upright men:* So impoſſible is it to fall from Grace, or for them to be otherwiſe who have once been the *godly party*. I have onely noted their Crime, the Lord grant them repentance, which when I ſee, they ſhall never hear more hereof from me, nor in the mean time have cauſe to charge me with inveighing againſt them: I come therefore to others, who, like wiſer and honeſter men, conſidering that in caſe a man have taken ſucceſſively two contrary Oaths; the firſt, if in matters lawful, cannot be voided by the ſecond, but retains ſtill its obligation, (it being, firſt, my ſin to make, and then ſtill my ſin to obſerve that Oath which makes me perjured) forthwith returned to their duty: yet for as much as the common people who have not *Senſes exerciſed*

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accurately to diſcern a difference betwixt things that ſeem the ſame, will be apt to judge theſe mens return (and others converſion) to peace and unity to be a changing too, all ſuch perſons, to wipe off this opprobrious appearance of Neutrality, will do well to ſtudy all means whereby they may either approve their univerſal fidelity to the Church, or manifeſt to the world that they came in upon ſound and ſober principles: otherwiſe though the Church may uſe them, I leave it to them to conſider, how far ſhe deſerves to truſt them, as having reaſon to ſuſpect, that if in any thing they halt ſtill, they will no longer be true to her intereſt, than it can promote or ſecure their own.

As to the ſecond ſort of Neuters, *who ſo halt between two opinions* as to partake ſomewhat of one and ſomewhat of another, yet not wholly to eſpouſe either, I dare not pronounce them abſolutely herein ſinners, but ſay, their thus doing is ſinful, or not according to the nature of the cauſes betwixt which they ſtand indifferent; for ſince all queſtions in Divinity have been diſputed even to the needleſs cleaving of an hair, and differences touching many *Theological apices* have given denomination to ſeveral Sects, as I believe there are many which I never heard

heard of, ſo numerouſly more to which I acknowledge my ſelf neuter. And it being true what is noted by *Tertullian*, that *thoſe things which are certain are always but few*, and none abſolutely neceſſary either to be known or believed, but thoſe which are certain, it is not onely a modeſt, but a ſafe courſe, in many cauſes, to ſuſpend our aſſent, to believe nothing touching either queſtion, but that both are doubtful, to be content to be ignorant where we cannot be certain. We muſt therefore ſo limit that culpable Neutrality, which we define to conſiſt in an indifferency, as not under the notion of Neutrality to condemn alſo modeſty and moderation.

Certa ſemper ſunt in paucis. In lib. de anim.

Firſt then, to be indifferent as to any thing abſolutely neceſſary either to be believed or done in order to Salvation is a damnable piece of Neutrality: For in this caſe we uſe to ſay there is no Neuter, becauſe even to be Neuter is to be an unbeliever, in that to be Neuter is not to believe. And this is that lukewarmneſs for which our Saviour threatned to ſpue out the *Laodicean* Church, ſhe in matters of faith and holineſs (*without which it is impoſſible to ſee God*) waining well nigh an indifferency.

Revel. 3. 16. Heb. 12.

Secondly, to be indifferent in any adiaphorous matter of practice, which the lawful Magiſtrate

Magiſtrate or Laws of the place do enjoyn, is a ſinful piece of Neutrality, becauſe it is a part of diſobedience; which is from hence manifeſt, for that paſſive obedience (or ſubmitting ones ſelf to puniſhment, rather than to do what is commanded) is never to take place, but where active obedience (or doing what is commanded) may not by the Law of God: ſo that for me no otherwiſe to obey the Magiſtrate Commanding an indifferent matter, than by ſubmitting to the puniſhment to be inflicted upon default, is for me to refuſe that obedience which by the Law of God I may perform, and therefore owe unto him; and in caſe I ſuffer, to be, according to the nature of my ſuffering, mine own ſpoiler or murtherer.

Thus far touching the form and matter of the Prophet's reprehenſion, which was our firſt part: we come now to the ſecond, wherein he ſtates the matter in queſtion, and ſecretly inſinuates the evidence that muſt ſway, in a *Dilemma*, or compound argument, which takes in both the terms, to which they ſtood indifferent; and ſo places them, that which part ſoever they grant (and one they muſt neceſſarily) they ſtand convict; to which kind of argument, as *Rhetoricians* ſpeak, if we ſubjoyn an aſſumption, Part II.

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it will conclude, as a perfect Ratiocination, thus; *If the LORD be God, he is to be followed*; *If Baal, he: But either the LORD, or Baal, is God*, Therefore *the one is to be followed*, nor is by any means *halting between* these *two* to be admitted: whereby we see how *pertinent* the whole argument is; let us now examine how *rational* it's parts.

Memb. I. Εἰ ἔστι κύριος ὁ θεός. Sept.

It's first member is, *If the LORD be God follow him*: אִם יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים If *Jehovah be the God*; This the more emphatical, the other else the same. The foundation, indeed, of both members, is, *Whosoever is God is to be followed*; upon which it is argued, If *the Lord be God he is, &c.* Now this foundation, as it is taken for granted by the Prophet, so it is not by the People gainsaid; it being one of the first principles of that natural Religion which is to be found in the hearts, not onely of all nations, but of all men; That there is a God, and this God such a Being, to whom the most Sacred Honour is due: as we see in the case of the heathenish *Lystrians*, whom we find no sooner possest with an imagination, that S. *Paul* and S. *Barnabas* were *Gods in the likeness of men*, than preparing to do them the homage of sacrifice. And indeed as this matter needs not, so (like other first principles) it scarce admits

Acts 14.

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any other proof than what the reaſon of the thing carries in it, which is alone and in it ſelf ſufficient: For the common notion of a God, (or that which we all conceive in our mindes when we hear this name, God) being *A certain moſt glorious Majeſty, Maker & Lord of all, whom we all ought therefore to adore*, acknowledging that whatever honour we either do or can to him perform, is leſs than we owe or he deſerves; this, I ſay, being that which all mean by this word, God, when we have ſaid there is a God, we have ſaid alſo there is ſuch an one whom we ought all to follow and obey, and conſequently that whoſoever is ſuch, is to be followed: ſo that to have underſtood this, is to have proved it.

This the conſequence of the Prophet's argument being thus clear, and there being no queſtion, but that either the Lord or Baal was God, they ſtood already convict of the ſinfulneſs of their Neutrality, and there needed that onely thing to be proved, *that the Lord was God*, and thoſe of them, that of the two were rather followers of *Baal*, would ſtand convict of Idolatry alſo; which matter, not ſo much the Prophet, as the Lord himſelf making good by a miracle, the hiſtory whereof is without the Text, I ſhall not meddle with; eſpeci-

ally, becauſe dealing with profeſſed Chriſtians, it would be as unneceſſary for me to prove, as it was needful for him who dealt with Idolatrous, at leaſt Neutral, *Jews*. The application therefore of this part of his argument remains, which ſhall be by deducing from this general ſuch particular conſectaries, which may be ſeaſonable in ſeveral caſes, wherein many of this preſent age are miſerably halting.

And Firſt, *If the Lord being God is to be followed*, then will follow hence, that whatſoever Science delivers to us the knowledge of this God is above all others to be embraced and look'd into, as inſtructing us of that God who above all, and neceſſarily, (if we intend our own happineſs) is to be followed: and ſo, there will not be found any ſtudy or ſpeculation in the world wch muſt not veil to the Chriſtian Faith, and before this light acknowledge it's own ignoble obſcurity; of the knowledge hereof therefore no one ought, under colour of any other his main ſtudy or employment, to be wholly unacquainted, much leſs negligent, or Sceptically contemplative. There is no Science, whoſe whole body conſiſts of nothing but unqueſtionable Axioms; or if there were, I am ſure Divinity would come as nigh being ſuch, as any, if we admit, (what it is moſt rational

tional to admit) That he who is God is neither ſo ill natured as to envy the knowledge of himſelf to his reaſonable creature, nor ſo tyrannical as to expect obedience therefrom, he in the mean time not diſcovering his will which is to be obeyed, and (what is as equitable;) That, there being extant no other pretended diſcoveries of this will, which can plead to have come from God, when compared with Holy Scripture, this therefore muſt be that *ſure word of prophecy*, by which whatſoever came from God, that is neceſſary either to be believed of him, or done in obedience to him, may be plainly found and clearly diſcerned. Some have not doubted to affirm, that there are not impoſſibilities enough in Chriſtian Doctrine, for an active and noble faith to receive: if that be not too boldly ſaid, this cannot, that there are not uncertainties enough in it, for charity and peaceableneſs to determine, or elſe to ſilence, at leaſt, the uncertainty of many queſtions therein, which later ages have raiſed (and any now adays, that pleaſe, may ſafely overlook) ſhould not ſo much deter men from applying themſelves to the knowledge of Chriſtianity, as the excellency of thoſe things, which therein are certain and amongſt all undoubted, ſhould inflame them thereto; which excellency I may 2 Pet. 1. 19.

confidently aver to be ſuch, that (in this very point of intellectuals) there is no Science under heaven, that ennobleth the ſoul and raiſeth it to ſo high a pitch, as Divinity doth: It is *Sion* which alone ſends forth the Eagles, in compariſon whereof *Athens* beſt are but Owls. For had I left none of the *Mæanders* and intricacies of nature either unſearch'd or unſeen, had I rifled Earth and Sea, had I ſcal'd the Heavens, and trac'd the Stars through all their Orbs, ſo that I knew their leaſt Epicycles and Declenſions, as well as themſelves, and could tell the Laws of their motions as infallibly as they obſerve them, did I at once comprehend all the moſt refined precepts of Philoſophick morality, the beſt rules of prudence, the myſteries of States and Governments, could I diſtinguiſh as thin as an Angel, and ſpeak as ſweetly as the imaginary *Suada*; in a word and with reverence to the Almighties wiſdom, had I, if poſſible, the Omniſcience of God himſelf, that knowledge alone being excepted by which he knows himſelf, ſo that it might be ſuppoſed that though I knew all things elſe, I knew not him, I ſee not how ſuch an Omniſciency it ſelf could truly denominate me wiſe. For if Wiſdom be, what it was ever defined, the knowledge of the beſt and moſt ſublime matters, and there be none

better

better than *the firſt and chiefeſt good*, none higher than the moſt High, then whatſoever knowledge ſticks at any thing below him falls ſo much ſhort of Wiſdom, and may no more truly be call'd ſo, than an Heap of Rubbiſh may a Treaſure.

Wherefore, my *Brethren*, whatever the particular iſſue of things may here below ever prove, let us never repent our ſelves of our eſpouſed ſtudy, nor at any time ſlacken our diligence herein: *The* LORD *being God let us follow him*; the Science in which we labour delivering to us the knowledge of him, let it have our utmoſt *pains*, our *beſt hours*, our *chiefeſt thoughts*. *Meditate upon theſe things, give thy ſelf wholly to them.* [Ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι. *Be dwelling in them*] if thou intendeſt προκοπὴν, *proficiency*, you know whoſe counſel it is. *When Eccentrical ſtudies for the main take up a Divine, it is a thouſand to one but he proves corrupt in Doctrine, remiſs in practice, one or both; but it will aſſuredly follow, that he ſhall grow negligent and dull in his Office, and hear ill amongſt the people.* (You will pardon the confidence of the Aſſertion, for its Truth.) 1 Tim. 4. 15.

What we have ſaid of matters of Chriſtian faith, we will ſay alſo of the Precepts of Chriſtian life: If the Law or Rules of Living, which II.

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the Scripture delivers are the Law of this God, then ought they, and that above all other Precepts, to be obſerved. This holds ſtill due analogy to the ground of the Prophet's argument, that *whoſoever is God is to be followed.* It is moſt divinely obſerved by *Plato*, that *of the gods counſel* or *will nothing can be known without an Oracle:* and I will not fear to gratifie the Enemies of Scripture, ſo far as to grant what I am ſure the Chriſtian Church will not refuſe, that if there be any *Oracle* in the world which can be proved to contain a Revelation of the divine will by ſo good Arguments as the Scripture may, it ſhall be eſteemed by us of equal, nay of greater authority. But the beſt Morals ever extant in the world, beſides what we read in Scripture, bear their Authours in their faces, with whoſe frailties every page of them is interſperſt; and whatſoever of virtue they teach, we ſhall finde the ſame to be either ſome of the lower rudiments of Chriſtianity, or at leaſt to be had more purely from theſe *ſacred Fountains.*

Phædon.

It is indeed reported of *Julian* that he preferred *Pindar*'s Odes before *David*'s Pſalms, and *Phocylides* before *Solomon*'s Proverbs; yet as he could not pretend that either of thoſe his admired Authours were inſpired by God; ſo who-

whoſoever ſhall conſider them together, (which is not the Work of a Sermon) ſhall finde a greater diſparity than of that in the Adage, Χῖος πρὸς Χῶον:

Of all the pretences in this caſe, that which hath moſt taken in the World ſince our Saviour's coming, is the *Alcoran*, which the *Turks* and their Dominions eaſily received, as delivering a Religion *ſuitable to the* Genius *and manners of the People*. But beſides that Hiſtories, which give us its riſe, eaſily diſcover its impoſture, it moſt manifeſtly betrays it ſelf, in owning our *Jeſus* the Saviour of the World, and yet not onely denying his Death, contrarily to the Relations of Heathen Writers themſelves, but obtruding a Rhapſody of Precepts for his, which even Nature her ſelf, with that half dye ſhe yet hath, can diſcern to be vicious, and the whole World knows to contradict the Body of that Doctrine which was divulged and received in the World as his, long before *Mahomet* breathed.

Turcarum gens pugnaciſſima—facile ſuſcepit religionem moribus ſuis congruentem. Hug. Grot. de ver. Chriſt. Rel. l. 6.

About the Year 1200. came forth at *Paris* a Book under the name of the *Eternal Goſpel*, or the *Goſpel of the Holy Ghoſt*, which pretended to be *Melius perfectius & dignius*, than the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, and did pronounce that upon its coming and promulgation, *Evacuaretur Evangelium*

Nichol. Eymeric. director. Inquiſit part. 2. queſt. 9. ſect. 4. Idem, & Mat. Pariſ. ad An. Dom. 1256.

gelium Christi, written by one *Johannes de Parma* an *Italian* Monk, and then of the Order of the *Mendicant Friers*, whose Order this Gospel endeavouring above all other to establish was by them, for about 56. years space, endeavoured to be introduced: but it excelled the Gospel of *Christ* onely for such absurd Blasphemies as these, that granting both the Son and Holy Ghost to be God, yet it did assert, *Quòd Spiritus Sanctus accepit aliquid ab Ecclesiâ, sicut Christus in quantum homo accepit aliquid à Spiritu Sancto; Quòd Christus & Apostoli non fuerunt perfecti in vitâ contemplantium; Quòd vita activa jam fructuosa non est, sed vita contemplativa; Quòd nullus simpliciter est idoneus ad instruendum homines de spiritualibus & æternis, nisi qui nudis pedibus incedunt*, with much more such and worse stuff. Now these being the accursed and vain Doctrines of the Pretenders to another Gospel or Rule of Christian life, what do they but in effect confirm the Gospel of our Lord in the possession of its long and justly obtained authority? It being then of God, let us closely follow it, and think our selves no otherwise Christians than as we walk, as well as speak and believe, according to this Rule.

III. And then further, If we receive that the Lord being God is to be followed, we must also receive

ceive that the *Unity* of the *Church* of this God, being this God's Ordinance, is to be obſerved, at leaſt not to be forſaken. When the Scripture terms the Church *Chriſt's Body, the Houſe of the Living God, the Mother of us all*, it is moſt clear to me, that whoſoever forſakes the Church cannot conclude himſelf to be a Member of Chriſt's Body, or Childe of God's Family. And for men to content themſelves with the conceit of holding union with the Inviſible Church, when they muſt needs acknowledge they deſert the unity of the Viſible, is for them to reſolve to be of no other Church but the Church of Heaven (for that's the Inviſible Church) though they themſelves are yet in an earthly ſtate. But on the contrary, That that part of the Church which is on earth is viſible, and that as far forth as it is viſible ſo far forth its unity is viſible, cannot I think be gainſaid; Which being granted, and what hath been juſt before proved being conſidered together, I cannot ſee how it can be rationally thought, that they who are out of the viſible union and fellowſhip of the Church are not alſo out of all viſible way and likelihood of ſalvation: All which as it cannot but manifeſt how dangerous, and, before God, how damnable the ſin of *Schiſm* is; ſo it ought to be an

Εἰ τὶς σχίζοντι ἀκολουθεῖ. βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσει. *Ignat. in Ep. ad Philadelph.*

Argument to all that are guilty of Departure to make a ſpeedy Return.

If it be demanded, How then can we expect Salvation, having departed from *Rome*? which we cannot deny ſtill to retain the Eſſentials of a Church, and once to have been the Mother of theſe Weſtern Churches. The Anſwer is, What it ever was, that we are no farther departed from *Rome*, than ſhe is departed *from her ſelf*, that is, from the Apoſtolick and primitive purity. And here, in caſe any man reply, that they no farther depart from us than we with *Rome* have departed from the Primitive *Church*; I challenge the whole party that ſay ſo, to inſtance in one Ceremony now injoyned by our *Church*, which may not be proved to have been in uſe in the *Church* (ſome centuries of years) before ever ſuch a thing as a *Pope* or *Univerſal Biſhop* was heard of in the World: Which if it be ſo, what injurious, peeviſh, and uncharitable dealing with us is it, to the end that they may caſt an *Odium* upon us before the common people, to charge us with the borrowing of thoſe things from the *Papiſts*, which, if they will ſearch Antiquity, they will finde to have been in the *Church* long before a *Pope*.

But put the caſe we had taken from *Rome* ſome things which we judge decent, and all

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muſt needs acknowledge in themſelves indifferent, were this a juſtifiable ground of their departure? They ſay they will do nothing without a written Rule: *Provocamus ad Scripturas:* Let them ſhew what Rule they have in holy Writ, upon account of indifferencies to abandon neceſſaries, and rather than ſubmit to a few Ceremonies (which they haply of late have too raſhly and furiouſly impugned) to break Communion with the *Church*, and endeavour the diſturbance of peace. *Ad populum phaleras!* Thoſe eaſie and popular pretences of tenderneſs of conſcience may ſerve to blinde the eyes of the ignorant multitude, upon whom they have thus much advantage, that many of them ſtand ſeduced already by ſuch fair ſhews formerly made: To thoſe that know what Conſcience means, and conſider that where it acts *beſides* or *againſt* its Rule, where the judgment determines without a rational evidence, it is no longer Conſcience, but corrupt humor or eſpouſed intereſt, or ſomewhat worſe; they ſignifie nothing at all but the pretenders obſtinacy. In ſhort, *If God be God follow him*; If Unity in his *Church* be a Law of his, cleave to it, and think not thou canſt one day anſwer the violation of a manifeſt Law, by pleading thine own being diſſatisfied touching ſuch punctilio's

as thou muſt needs acknowledge (at the leaſt) very diſputable, and therefore as uncertain; which diſſatisfaction either is by thee made greater than it is, or would not be at all if thou wouldſt do thy duty, weigh things nakedly as they are, ſubmit thy judgment upon due cauſe, and be no farther perſwaded of any thing, than thou canſt really make it out to thy ſelf and others.

From the Unity of the *Catholick Church* we will come to the Government of our particular *Church*, and applying the *Prophet*'s Argument hereto, ſay, By the ſame reaſon that *the* Lord being *God* is to be *followed*; by the ſame alſo that Government of the *Church* which can be beſt proved to be from God muſt obtain. Now as to the *divine right* of Epiſcopacy, if our Adverſaries ingenuity will ſerve them to acknowledge that to be a *divine right* when acknowledged for one thing, which they avouch to be ſo alledging it for another, I ſhall promiſe them *in tabulâ* (as I may at preſent) the proof thereof.

4.

That *the* Lord's *day is of divine right and inſtitution* is not by me queſtioned, any more than by them againſt whom my Diſcourſe proceeds: now of every particular which can be brought for the *divine right of the* Lord's *day* may (*pari jure*)

jure) be ſaid for the Divine Right of Epiſcopacy; I hope they will acknowledge the one, as well as they avouch the other, to be of Divine Inſtitution.

And that I may more clearly proceed herein, it will be neceſſary to remove one hindrance, which through the Common miſunderſtanding of People lies in my way, by mentioning the Apoſtles words to the *Coloſſians* touching the Sabbath, which are, *Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in reſpect of an Holy day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a ſhadow of things to come, but the body is Chriſt*: Where the Apoſtle at once aſſerts the Command for the obſervation of the Sabbath to be a part of the ſhadows or Ceremonial Law (as much Ceremonial, for ought there expreſt to the contrary, as the difference of meats and drink, the Inſtitution of the new Moon, or other Jewiſh Feaſts) and aſſures us of the abrogating the *ſhadows, the Body and Subſtance of all, Jeſus Chriſt, being come.* So that it cannot with any more truth be ſaid, that by the fourth Commandment we are enjoyned to keep Holy (ſtrictly) the firſt day of the week or the Lords day, than the fourth or ſixth; the face of which Commandment is alſo Coloſ. 2. 16, 17.

acknow-

acknowledged upon this account to be * Ceremonial, not onely by the Ancients, but by that judicious perſon Maſter *Calvin* alſo, and the ſence of it declared to be the ſame as our Church Catechiſme gives of it, *viz. That we ſhould ſerve God truly all the days of our life*, with this further * caution, that to ſay, that the Moral part of this Commandment is, *that we ſhould obſerve a ſeventh day*, or *one day in the week* (though not the Jewiſh Sabbath) is, [*Judaicâ opinione populum imbuere, ----- in Judæorum contumeliam diem mutare, diei ſanctitatem animo eandem retinere,*] Either *Judaiſme*, or *a contumelious depravation of it.* But it hath been the unhappy fate of our adverſaries to have followed this great Divine in whatſoever he departed from the Church, and to forſake him in others wherein he agrees. This obſtacle being removed (not out of any deſign of lifting out the Lords day or it's obſervation, (which let him be accurſed that ſhall do) but of diſcovering it's true grounds;) I ſhall briefly lay down that parallel which a moſt skilful hand drew in this caſe, contracting or adding according to preſent occaſion.

Πάσης σαββάτων παρατηρήσεως ἀπόστολε, &c. Cyril. Hieroſol. Catech. Illum. 4. Sub finem.

* *Peculiarem & Diviſam à reliquis conſideratione habet hoc præceptum. —— Umbratile veteres nuncupare ſolent.* And as to the ſence of it, ſaith he, *Finis præcepti eſt, ut propriis affectibus emortui regnum Dei meditemur. Id non uno die contentum, ſed toto vitæ noſtræ curſu, &c.* Juſt. lib. 2. cap. 8. Sect. 28. & 31.

& Sect. 34.

There

There was (ſaith my Author) *this ground in nature for the Lords day, that a certain part of our time ſhould be ſet apart for the ſpecial worſhip of God in publick; and the like ground is there for Epiſcopacy, that to the celebration of that worſhip, certain perſons by way of Office ſhould be aſſigned, who for their labours herein ſhould be worthily rewarded.* Now I adde, that whereas in nature there was no more particular ground for one day in ſeven, than for one in eight, or one in ten (for that reaſon in the Commandment, *the Lord reſted the ſeventh day*, is not intrinſecal to the nature of the thing, but proceeded onely from the Will of the Lawgiver, preſcribing his own example as an incentive to the obſervation of this his Law;) Whereas, I ſay, there was no more particular ground for that, there is in this caſe a particular ground in the nature of the thing, that betwixt all ſuch conſecrated perſons there ſhould not be a parity or ἰσοτιμία, which is this, That they are not all of equal ability, nor of equal integrity; and the State of all Churches here on earth ever was, and will be ſuch, that they muſt depute thoſe to teach, and watch over others, who have need themſelves, in many caſes of their work, to walk by the light of o-

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thers eyes, whoſe Counſels (every man naturally prizing his own) would have little ſway, if their Authours had no Authority over them; which Authority is alſo otherwiſe neceſſary, to keep all in their duty, or elſe puniſh and remove them: ſo that the People may as well caſt off their Miniſters, as the Miniſters their Biſhops; and we ſee, when the one had hapned the other had very neer ſucceeded. But to
2 return, *Of the Lords day there was amongſt the* Jews *a pattern, one day in ſeven to be ſanctified to God, and the like pattern was there of Epiſcopacy, the Government, by Chief Prieſts, Prieſts and* Levites, *Ordained by God himſelf. The In-*
3. *ſtitution of the* Lords *day came not immediately from Chriſt himſelf on earth, but from his Apoſtles, whom he left inveſted with a like Authority to his own, after his departure. A like inſtitution was there of this alſo from the ſame Apoſtles, guided as well in one as in the other, by an infallible ſpirit*; Which Apoſtolike Inſtitution, give me leave to ſay, may be proved by as good teſtimonies, and authorities, as any thing of this nature can be, yea by the very ſame *By which we prove the Canon of the Scripture to be the Canon of the Scripture*, that is, theſe Books, no more and no leſs, to be Scripture:

and

and if there be any credit to be given to Ancients (*and he muſt leave himſelf none who will deny all to them*, and be beſides *moſt miſerably guilty of diſhonouring his Father and Mother*,) the order came not onely from the Apoſtles, but was honored by their being of it. *Tertullian*, one of the moſt Ancient Writers, after a challenge made to the Hereticks to ſhew their ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles, affirms that as to the true Church, the Sees wherein the Apoſtles themſelves had ruled were not onely then in being, but had reſpectively a kind of preheminence, and not onely ſo, but could produce Biſhops placed in them, ſome by the Apoſtles, ſome by Apoſtolike men, that had long lived with the Apoſtles. But we muſt again return to our Authour, and ſay further, *The Obſervation of the Lords day was occaſioned by that Solemn Action of Chriſts riſing again thereupon. And this was occaſioned by thoſe ſeveral Orders, which were in the Church under Chriſt*, viz. *that in* w^ch *Chriſt himſelf was that of his Apoſtles inferiour to him, that of the ſeventy Diſciples inferiour*

Qui auctoritatem omnem majoribus ſuis admit, ſibi nullam relinquit. Dr. Primatus Faſſic. Controv. ob. 4.

Percurre Eccleſias Apoſtolicas apud quas ipſæ adhuc Cathedræ Apoſtolorum ſuis locis præſident (aliis præſidentur.)

He had a little before ſaid of the Hereticks; *Edant origines Eccleſiarum ſuarum: evolvant ordinem Epiſcoporum ita per ſucceſſiones ab initio decurrentem, &c. Hoc enim modo Eccleſiæ Apoſtolicæ cenſus ſuos deferunt: ſicut Smyrnæorum Eccleſia habens Polycarpum, ab Johanne collocatum refert: ſicut Romanorum Clementem à Petro ordinatum edit; proinde utique & cæteræ exhibent quos ab Apoſtolis in Epiſcopatum conſtitutos Apoſtolici ſeminis traduces habent* De præſcipt. adverſus hæret. Cap. 32.

4.

5. *unqueſtionably to them all. The mention of that under the name of the Lords day we meet with*
Revel. 1. *once in the* Revelation, *and under the equipollent*
Acts 20. 7. *term of the firſt day of the week, twice or thrice*
1 Cor. 16. 2. *elſewhere. And no whit leſs obſcure is the mention of the Order of Biſhops under a like Apocalyptical expreſſion of the Angel of the*
Revel. 2, & 3. Chapters. *Church of* Epheſus, *&c.* (*which by undoubted proofs hath been manifeſted to belong to this cauſe*) *and under the name of the Ruling El-*
1 Tim. 5. 17, 18. *der*, (which how contrarily to it's intent, of late, it was interpreted of Lay-Elders, by thoſe who notwithſtanding they thus interpreted would not thus fulfil the Text in their own interpretation, by allowing thoſe their ruling Elders the *double honour*, eſpecially (that which the next words, [*thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the corn*,] enforce) a ſhare with them in the Church-maintenance, I leave to the judgement of thoſe very expoſitors, proceeding with my Authour, to what *Saint* Paul *ſaith to* Timothy *and* Titus, *that he left the one at* Epheſus
1 Tim. 1. 3. *to ſee that ſome taught no other Doctrine*, Which is manifeſtly to have inſpection over the teaching Miniſtry, and the other *at* Crete
Tit. 1. 5. *to ſet in Order things that were wanting, and to Ordain Elders in every Church. To all which we*

may

may adde the oftner mention of Biſhops, Presbyters (or if we will give it a French-Engliſh word, Prieſts) and Deacons any where of the Lords day. *The obſcure mention of the* Lords day *in Scripture was explained in the writings of the firſt age, and particularly in* Ignatius *his Epiſtles. In the like manner the obſcurity of the Holy Text in this caſe was*, as by others, ſo *by the ſame* Ignatius, *in all his Epiſtles*, and particularly in each of thoſe ſix firſt, which were of ſuch Authority of old that Saint *Jerome* witneſſeth they uſed, even in his days, publickly to be read in the Churches, and have of late, after a Fiery trial made of them, received as well an ample Vindication from a famous Prelate, againſt whom the adverſe party cannot except, in that they have owned (I ſhould have ſaid, ſlandered) him for their friend, as an *acknowledgement from* Vedelius *himſelf that they are genuine*. To conclude this parallel, *The obſervation of the* Lords day *hath* (ever ſince the Apoſtles times) *continued in the Catholick Church* (*though not ſo Univerſally till the Jewiſh Sabbath was laid aſleep*) *and in every particular Church that we read of. And in the ſame Catholick Church, as it conteins under it as well the Eaſtern as the Weſtern Churches, hath this Order held from the ſame Apoſtles times till*

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Biſhop *Uſher.*

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this very day unqueſtioned that I know of (except by *Aerius*, who for his queſtioning of it, was Excommunicated,) *in every particular Church, till about the laſt Century, and in this Church, ever from it's very firſt plantation*, till the late interruption, as well in *England* and *Wales*, as * *Scotland* it ſelf, as is manifeſt, for any Ancient times, in *Bedes* Hiſtory of theſe Churches. After all which (the ſame, as to the ſubſtance of the heads, with what Doctor *Hammond* of famous memory writ in this cauſe about the beginning of the troubles) I remember the Authour profeſſeth he knew no more to be ſaid in the behalf of the Lords day; and as I believe it is abundantly more than could be ſaid by them, whoſe main allegation for it is the fourth Commandment, ſo I think that none after him will be able ever to find more in the caſe: which having ſaid, I preſume it is now ſeaſonable to deſire that the ſame plea may be entred for both, and that ſeeing there is the ſame reaſon for one as for the other, the one being already granted to be of ſuch Divine Right that it would be a moſt horrid innovation, and impudent wickedneſs, for any particular Church, either to attempt

* This ancient Order, [*viz.* of Epiſcopacy] was embraced (*in the Scotiſh Church, for of that he ſpeaks*) at the Reformation, *Ann.* 1560. and continued in the perſons of Superintendents, and Biſhop, till the year 1581, after that time it was born down, till 1598, when it began to be reſtored. Doctor *Lyndſay* in his *Narrat.* of the proceedings in the *Aſſemb.* at *Perth.*

tempt its alteration, or not ſubmit to its obſervation, to demand alſo that it may be reputed as horrid to deſire the Change, and as unchriſtian not to ſubmit to the Government of Epiſcopacy.

If any one ſeek to wardoff all this with thatold *Smectymnuan* Buckler, the chief of thoſe Cavils, which that party meant for Arguments againſt our Government, and ſay, *Our Biſhops are not what the antient & primitive ones were*, I confeſsit, their ſtate is different, and ſo (God be thanked) is the caſe of the reſt of the Clergy, they having a ſetled and (commonly) not an illiberal maintenance: Now if the others could be content to enjoy the ampleſt Parſonages of theſe Ages, it is ſurely unjuſt in them to envy the *Biſhops* their ſcarcely proportionable Revenues; and much more unjuſt, for that their *Club* of *Divines* having (if they hold with their *Brethren*) *a Beam in their own eyes*, and claiming no ſmall power over [a] Laws and [b] Princes themſelves to meddle with *the Mote* in others, and upbraid thoſe of

[a] The Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies have power to abrogate and aboliſh all Statutes and Ordinances concerning Eccleſiaſtical matters that are found noyſome and unprofitable and agree not with the time, or are abuſed by the People. II. Book of Diſcip. chap. 7.

[b] To diſcipline muſt all eſtates within this Realm be ſubject, as well the Rulers as the Ruled. I. Book of Diſcip. Head 7. As the Miniſters and others of the Eccleſiaſtical ſtate are ſubject to the Civil Magiſtrate, ſo ought the perſon of the Magiſtrate to be ſubject to the Kirk in Eccleſiaſtical Government. II. Book, Diſc. ch. 2. And again juſt after, As Miniſters are ſubject to the judgment of the Magiſtrates in external things if they offend, ſo ought the Magiſtrates if they tranſgreſs in matters of conſcience and Religion. (*Ibid.*) And that, without any Reclamation or appeal to any Judge Civil or Eccleſiaſtical in the Realm. II. Book of Diſc. ch. 12. And leſt charity ſhould conſtrue all this of ſome lower and ſubordinate Magiſtrates, the XIII. ch. ſaith, The Princes and Magiſtrates themſelves not being exempted.

any uſurped either Power or Titles, who aſſume nothing of either, but what the indulgent piety of the *nurſing Fathers and Mothers of the Church*, that is, *Chriſtian Princes*, hath ſo long thought fit (by *divine permiſſion*, if not *inſtinct*) to devolve upon them.

As to thoſe other objected degeneracies of *innovated Elections* and *ſole juriſdiction*, they are for the moſt part falſe, and where they are not, juſtifiable; at leaſt that ſmall experience which this *Church* hath, in theſe few years of *Miſ-rule*, had of *Presbytery*, (though curb'd by its own Patrons, as fearing haply its laſh themſelves) will force from all indifferent perſons this Confeſſion, *That the little finger* thereof *is heavier than the whole loyns of the Biſhops, Conſiſtories*, and all the reſt againſt which they pleaded offence, and that neither Clergy nor People can enjoy under any Government more liberty (and yet no more than *Chriſtian*) than they do under the *Prelatical*. For my further Anſwer hereunto, I remit them to a ſober Authours judgment no leſs in their eſteem than ours, *If ſo be* (ſaith he) *you will bring again the uſages of thoſe primitive times* in every thing; *you muſt bring again the ſame ſtate of the Church*; which if you do, the Office it ſelf will continue ſtill: There being then for the Office that which

Si revocas illorum temporum mores, etiam & ſtatu revoca. Wolfg. Muſcul.

which in other caſes is acknowledged *a divine inſtitution*, ſubmit thereto, and *if the* Lord *be God follow him.*

I ſhall onely touch upon the laſt member of the Prophet's Argument, to gratifie the reſpective Adverſaries of all which I have ſaid already by a liberal conceſſion of what he granted his, *If Baal be God follow him. Baal* I take to be the ſame with *Belus* in profane Authours, relying (beſides the affinity of the names) upon *Lactantius* his computing *Belus*, out of one *Thalus*, to have been antienter than the *Trojan* War, which is commonly ſaid to have hapned about the time of the *Judges*; now in their days we finde the *Jews* ſerving *Baal*, the Worſhip of whom (they receiving it from the *Sidonians*, or other Nations, which were left to prove them) muſt needs have been antienter than that Age; ſo that as well the time of the original, as name of both agreeing, we may in all likelihood conclude them to have been the ſame. Now (ſaith the *Prophet*) if this ſo general Idol *Baal*, or (as in the *Apocrypha Bel*, or) *Belus*, can by any means prove himſelf to be God, I give you leave to follow him, and deſert the God of your Fathers.

Memb. 2.

Inſtit. lib. 1. *c. ult.*

Judges 2. *&* 3. *chap.*

Would it not have exceeded the bounds of a Ser-

Sermon, we ſhould have applied this to the forenamed particulars, and have ſaid, If there be any nobler and more divine knowledge than what the *Chriſtian Faith* delivereth, follow it: If there be any better Precepts of life than what the Goſpel injoyns, practiſe them. But on the contrary, If the knowledge of an infinite Majeſty, Creatour of all things, his Nature and Works, of another Life after this, and an Eternity of Happineſs, if faithfull, of Miſery if vicious, to be enjoyed by the immortal Soul and raiſed Body united, of bleſſed Angels our Companions and Miniſters; If alſo theſe Precepts of Holineſs, Juſtice, Temperance, Love, Peaceableneſs, and Unity, be all of them ſo good, ſo much the beſt, that they have and daily do extort from their unwilling Adverſaries (whoſe practices tend to deſtroy them) the praiſe of them [*Fas eſt ab hoſte doceri*] believe then, and follow theſe. And as to the laſt of the aforementioned Heads, If the Builders of any of thoſe Eccleſiaſtical *Babels* (for our Age hath been more fertile of *Confuſion* than to afford onely one) can ſhew ſuch a divine Authority for their intentionally erected Frame of Government, as hath been produced for this, let them take all. But if their way of

aſſerting

asſerting theirs be by wreſting ſome more dubious Texts from their natural intent and the received ſenſe which the conſtant Tradition of the *Church* (the beſt Interpreter of Scripture but Scripture) hath ever ſince the Apoſtles their very Authour's days, given of them, and then by picking out ſome uncertain paſſages or broken Sentences of Fathers and Councils to contradict the manifeſt current of all their joynt Suffrages, then though they propheſie at this rate with *Baal*'s Prophets, *till the time of the evening ſacrifice, and cut* (not *themſelves* but) three Nations with their zealous Steel, till Rivers of *Bloud guſhing forth* from each unite their over-flowing ſtreams into one common Deluge, then, I ſay, remember, that as this was never *the cuſtome of the Church of God* by ſuch means to propagate its Doctrine, ſo that neither the one expedient of putting force upon *Writings*, nor the other of *ſanguinary compulſion of King and Kingdom*, hath any encouragement from the *God of Truth and Peace*; and therefore be conſtant and obedient to that which hath.

Having done with the Premiſes of the Prophet's Argument, it remains that I ſhould conclude againſt Neutrality, which I had intended

by applying all that I have ſaid in reproof thereof, and ſo to have reſumed the Prophet's *How long halt ye?* It was a Law either amongſt the *Athenians* or *Lacedæmonians* (my memory will not at preſent recover whether) that in caſe a Civil War happened, and therein any ſate at home quiet, neutral to both Factions, the War being ended, both ſhould come and pull down his Houſe to the ground, and his Goods become confiſcate. Certainly, Beloved, as to thoſe who in the main of *Chriſtianity* have been neutral, God will deal with them worſe than ſo at the *conſummation of all things*. I have already ſaid, that Neutrality in the Subſtantials of Religion differs not from *Atheiſm*, and then, let ſuch judge what retribution that day of recompence will bring them.

Apud Suetonium etiam Conſultante Cn. Pompeio de medijs & neutram partem ſequentibus, Cn. Domitius cenſuit hoſtium numero habendos. Suet. Nero. Sect. 2.

And as to thoſe who ſtand neutral in things determined by lawful Authority, we have ſaid, (and as far as I can ſee evinced) that *halting herein* is the ſame in effect with diſobedience: now the Apoſtle ſaith, *They that reſiſt* (and little difference betwixt *reſiſting* and refuſal of due *obedience*) *ſhall receive damnation*, at leaſt they do incur it.

Rom. 13.

I ſhall not apply this more particularly to my *Brethren* of the Miniſtry than by taking up

Sal-

Salvian's words, *Quicquid de aliis omnibus dictum eſt, magis abſque dubio ad eos pertinet, qui exemplo eſſe omnibus debeni, & quos utique tanto antiſtare cæteris oportet devotione, quanto antiſtant omnibus dignitate.* And elſewhere, *Magis damnabilis eſt malitia, quam titulus bonitatis accuſat, & reatus impii eſt pium nomen.* If Neutrality be a ſin in others, 'tis doubly ſo in us, eſpecially ſeeing our Lives teach as much as our Doctrine (not onely the common ſort, but * many other now adays, whoſe wiſdom may paſs current for a degree above vulgar, in matters of Morality, walking more by Example than they do by Precept). Shall I deal plainly? May not the Neutrality of the People both as to Subſtantials and matters of injoyned order derive it ſelf from ours in each caſe? 'Tis well if we can excuſe our ſelves in both. *Matthew* of *Paris* in his Hiſtory *ad Annum Dom.* 1072. relates, that about that time, *Literas ab inferno miſſas commenti ſunt quidam, in quibus Satanas & omne contubernium inferorum omni Eccleſiaſtico cœtui & gradui gratias emiſit, quòd cùm in nullo voluptatibus ſuis deeſſent, tantum*

Ad Eccleſ. Carbol. l. 2.

De Guberna. Dei. l. 4.

* The *French* Philoſopher, whoſe Principle it was to doubt of all things, though he profeſſes he meant not that in matters of practice, yet elſewhere makes imitation of the wiſeſt men the rule of manners, at leaſt ſaith it was of his, *Ut certè intelligerem quidnam ſapientiſſimi revera optimum cenſer ent ad ea quæ agebant potiùs quàm ad ea quæ loquebantur, attendebam. Des Cartes, in diſſert. de methodo.*

numerum ſubditarum ſibi animarum vitæ & prædicationis ſuæ incuriâ paterentur ad infernum deſcendere, quantum ſæcula anteacta nunquam viderint. God be thanked, the contumely cannot without the greateſt injury be applied to this Age; (But we muſt take care that no particular perſons of us give occaſion of ſuch Calumnies to thoſe who are already apt to give us more in ſuch caſes than our due) yet if the Devil ſhould have occaſion at the laſt day to thank any of us, but for one accurſed Proſelyte which our negligence or corruptneſs had ſent him, it would ſurely much imbitter, if poſſible, Heaven it ſelf.

Levit. 21. 17, 18, &c. The Levitical Law, we know, admitted no *Prieſts* that were lame; And I am much deceived if I may not ſay of the Laws of our *Church* the ſame in ſome ſenſe: For that ſhe never intended either the reception or foſtering of ſuch *Halters* as we have ſpoken of, we may ſee; in that ſhe neither admits any Miniſter till according to the XXXVI. Canon of 1603. he have ſimply ſubſcribed *lubens & ex animo*, nor intends that Subſcription as a formal Ceremony, but as a binding Engagement, as appears by Canon the XXXVIII. which is, "*If any Miniſter after he hath once ſub-*

ſubſcribed, ſhall omit to uſe the Form of Prayer, or any of the Orders or Ceremonies preſcribed in the Communion Book, let him be ſuſpended; and if after a moneth he reform not and ſubmit himſelf, let him be excommunicated; and if not within another moneth, let him be depoſed. Wherefore I humbly our *halting brethren*, that, while they curteil the prayers, lay aſide their Surplices in favour of ſome mens humours, put them on onely for fear of others, and ſuch like things many; they will be pleaſed to conſider, if they wrong not hereby, Firſt, their own conſciences, with the guilt of breaking this ſolemn ſubſcription (which ſure comes but little ſhort of an Oath) made to the Church, and Secondly, their ſecurity, in making themſelves liable by every ſuch Act to Suſpenſion and further puniſhment as they proceed: Sure I am they wrong their honeſt brethren, who think themſelves (albeit they have ſworn and ſubſcribed to no more then they) obliged (thereby) to a total Conformity; and doing their duty herein are, for their ſakes who neglect theirs, traduced by the male-contented party (who brook every man the better by how much leſs obedient) for perſons

ſons more Superſtitious, as they call it, than they need.

If ſuch will not conſider their engagements, I hope the reſpective Church-wardens will look to their Oath, and make a true anſwer to every propoſed Article. But if neither will hold touch, and both conſpire to be unfaithful to God, by whom, and the Church, to whom they have ſworn fidelity, I doubt not but that at long run, they will meet with ſome honeſt Neighbour who will do them both the juſtice of a *preſentment*; and then I preſume, though in the mean time they ſhould think my words fit for nothing but to paſs away with the breath which utters them, they will be taught effectually what it is to betray their truſt, *to halt between two opinions*, when they are moſt juſtly engaged by all that's Sacred to follow one onely.

Heb. 13. 23, 21. *Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the Eternal Spirit*, perfect his Church in every Pſa. 132. 9. 16. good work, clothe his Prieſts with righteouſneſs, and cauſe his people to ſhout for joy

joy, *make the one able, faithful and ſucceſsful in their work, and edifie and keep conſtant the other in their moſt holy Faith, and in the end bring both with Angels and all the hoſts of Heaven to ſing unto himſelf, the one Lord, yet Father Son and Holy Ghoſt, moſt Triumphan Praiſes and Thanksgivings, world without end, Amen.*

FINIS.